

The Messenger

The Atlanta Church of Christ
in Guinnett

Elders

Steve Galbreath
Alan Rouse

Evangelist

Richard Alawaye

Teacher

Gary Roberson

Women's Ministry & Welfare

Sarah Alawaye
Roxanne Galbreath
Sherry Rouse

Teens

John and Marisabel
Becker

Deacons

Peter Berry
Steve Collier
Danny Doble
Danny Emmett
Audie Flowers
Bill Francis
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Glenn Hayes
Kendall Knight
Karl Lynn
Russ McGarr
Alvin Modest
Jeff Mueller
Todd Reynolds
Dan Stehr

YOU HAVE ALREADY WON

By John Yang

When I was growing up, I was one of the biggest Dallas Cowboys fans. I knew all the players on offense and defense. My room, which I shared with my two younger brothers, was a shrine to the Cowboys. I had a life-size poster of Ed “Too Tall” Jones. It went from the floor up to the ceiling. He was truly “Too Tall”. I remember we used to have church in the afternoons. I hated that because I could never watch the Cowboys when they played in the early game. My first talk with God was concerning the Cowboys. I prayed and prayed that God would help them win against those “evil” Washington Redskins. I remember running in from church and turning on the television to see the final score. Redskins over Cowboys! I was devastated. I concluded that there was no God. Why would a God who had so much power let the Redskins beat the Cowboys? I later realized that God must be in great dilemma every Sunday because so many people pray to Him about their teams.



I still watch those old classic games on ESPN Classic channel. For those who may not know, that’s where they show the old, great sports games. My wife asks me, “Why do you watch those games when you already know the outcome?” That’s precisely it. I do know the outcome. I don’t get bent out of shape when they fumble or throw a few interceptions. I just sit back and enjoy the victories. We always win at the end. The outcome is secure. It cannot be changed. It is in the history book forever.

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YOU HAVE ALREADY WON

(Continued)

You see, as disciples, we already know the outcome. We have won! The outcome is secure through the blood of Jesus. Victory is ours. We are just in the midst of Heaven's Classic channel. But too often, we get too bent out of shape when things go wrong or not exactly the way we planned it. We get so devastated looking at our fumbles and interceptions. We even question if we would win the game. Our sins and failures make us less than a super disciple. We know that God loves us, but not sure if He likes us. We feel like we are the last son or daughter at the bottom of the totem pole. The truth is God is not concerned about what we've done but rather who we are. We are His prized possession (Exodus 19:5 and Psalm 135:4). We are His favorite sons and daughters. He has engraved us on the palms of His hands (Isaiah 49:16). The blood of Jesus speaks loudly about it:

"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding." (Ephesians 1: 7-8).

Sin makes us forget who we are and to whom we belong. All we need to do is repent, accept His forgiveness, and move on. It's not that complicated. Satan wants to make things complicated. He wants to get inside your head and mess you up. He is the accuser (Revelation 12:9-10). He is always accusing you. He will bring up your past sins and failures to question who

you are. If you have repented, God has forgiven you (2 Corinthians 7:10). Why can't you forgive yourself? Why do you walk around in shame and guilt because of your sins? Why can't you accept His grace and mercy? It is pride to think that we can earn our way into heaven. Yes, there are consequences for our sins, and we need to deal with them. I don't want to minimize sin in any way. We need to flee from it. But that doesn't make us any less a favorite son or daughter of God.

Confidence is a dangerous thing to Satan. He doesn't like it because it reminds him of God. We are not confident in ourselves but confident in our Father. The outcome is secure. Victory has been won! Let's not wander in our past anymore, but instead let's march forward and run the race marked out for us. I really believe that our greatest days are ahead of us. The God that I know has always moved from strength to strength. He is not done with you. He still wants to use you. There is still so much to do and so many people to be brought into a relationship with God. Life is too short to sit on the sidelines; you need to get into the game. Recapture God's dream for your life. Stop chasing the American dream; it's not worth it. It is empty. The American dream is an illusion. Don't live for anything that death can take away, but instead live for Him who has given us victory. Heaven awaits you and me. We are victorious because of Jesus.

Giving and Receiving

By Jeff Mueller

A significant ministry for the leadership of the Atlanta Church of Christ in Gwinnett is the benevolence ministry. The leadership's policy is to keep a separate budget for the purposes of benevolence, and promote the contribution of free will offerings from those so moved to support benevolence to fund its budget apart from the regular church operating budget. This free will offering is collected at the church's midweek service.

What is benevolence? Benevolence is an act intending to show kindness and good will. Someone who is benevolent will be generous in providing aid to others. For the Atlanta Church of Christ in Gwinnett, benevolence is reflected in supporting the various needs of our local brothers and sisters in Christ, and in some cases, the local community at large.

The experience of serving in benevolence exposes me to a lot of giving and receiving. All of us at various times in our life are in a position of giving and likewise a position of receiving. During a time of unemployment, my family has been a recipient of the food pantry that our benevolence ministry keeps. We have also had the blessing of being able to support the benevolence ministry by our weekly offerings. In this article, I would like to offer some spiritual principles and insight into the heart of the benevolence ministry by introducing a term to be gleaned from Acts 2, which I would like to call "Commonism:"

Giving and Receiving

(continued)

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day

they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:41-47)

Legend has it that this passage was one of several literary sources that formed and shaped Karl Marx's

Communist Manifesto of "to each, according to his needs, from each, according to his ability." While the term "Commonism" is only one letter different from Communism, it is intended to mean something quite different. Inspired by the passage above, "Commonism" can be the statement: "What's mine is yours." In the search for man-made utopia, Communism devolved into: "What's yours is mine."

TABLE OF GIVING AND RECEIVING – THE KINGDOM OF GOD vs. THE WORLD

	"Commonism's" spiritual fruit (healthy; of the Spirit)	Communism's spiritual fruit (unhealthy; of the world)
Giver	No one claims any of their possessions are their own (Luke 14:33)	Giving under compulsion (II Corinthians 9:5)
Receiver	Faith as demonstrated by humility, diligence and gratitude for whatever I receive (Mt.15:27)	Sense of entitlement and lack of gratitude (Luke 17:11-19 – nine of the ten lepers. Also John 6:25-70)

While we know that utopia will only be realized when we reach the Church Triumphant (heaven), God offers us the refuge of "Commonism" as a means of giving and receiving in a spiritually healthy way. Here is both the beauty and the challenge of a benevolence ministry: God meets us in hardship with mercy, in envy with generosity, in desire with satisfaction. The existence of a benevolence ministry in God's kingdom presents opportunities for spiritual growth but also the holy fear of spiritual challenge to our hearts in how we both give AND receive. For this article, I want to start with receiving in a spiritually healthy way. We'll look at giving in a spiritually healthy way in the next newsletter.

From the standpoint of receiving in a spiritually healthy way, the journey starts with your desire to:

Keep Asking!!! See [Luke 9:5-13](#):

Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' "Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and

give you anything.' I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs. "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Please ask for assistance if you need help! But when you ask for help,

Receive the help in the spirit of the "Canaanite woman". Consider [Matthew 15:21-28](#):

Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession." Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us."

He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." "Yes, Lord," she said, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

When you ask, the journey has just begun. As happened with this Gentile mother, the answer you get may not be what you expect, and it might even challenge the thoughts and attitudes of your heart ([Hebrews 4:12](#)). You may not be called a dog by your Lord, but you may be asked to put together a budget, or you may be asked to take steps of faith that show diligence. Respond with the faith of the Canaanite woman, knowing that your heavenly Father is on His throne and knows what you need in accord with His words in [Matthew 6:32](#). When we receive benevolence in the spirit of this woman, the journey will end like it did for her: her request granted and loved ones healed.

Look forward to our next newsletter, when we'll talk about giving in a spiritually healthy way.

Parenting Class by Mike & Mary Shapiro

By Sherry Rouse

Seventeen of our parents, my husband and I, and our daughter & son-in-law all attended the parenting workshop at the North River Church of Christ. The class was taught by the Shapiros for elementary and below parents. The comments of all that attended was that it was very helpful, and many came home and started putting into practice what they had learned. In their opening remarks, the Shapiros downplayed their psychology credentials and emphasized the Bible as their most important resource and the help of other disciples over the years as they raised their three children, all of whom are disciples. Listed below are books they recommended and some that we recommend on parenting.

Dare to Discipline by Dr. James Dobson – Every parent should have this book, especially as your child approaches one year old. **The Strong-Willed Child** by Dr. James Dobson – Do you have a “difficult” child? Reading this and putting it into practice after having read **Dare to Discipline** will help you to deal with your child righteously. **The Tender Years** by Geri Laing and Elizabeth Laing-Thompson – A wonderful book to help Moms (and Dads too) start out raising your child in the Lord. Written for Moms of pre-schoolers, but parents of young elementary age children will also benefit. **Raising Awesome Kids in Troubled Times** by Sam & Geri Laing – A very helpful book that will help you raise your children in a godly way. **Preparing for Adolescence** by Dr. James Dobson – Read this book BEFORE your child is 9 or 10 years old to be ready for the teen years.

Also recommended are any other books by James Dobson; any other books by the Laings; any parenting books by Dr. John Rosemond.

Parenting in the Pew by Robbie Castleman – The elders recommend everyone in our church (with children ages 4 years old & up) get this book to help you train your children to love God as we worship in church together. **Shepherding Your Child's Heart** by Tedd Tripp – I have not read this personally, but many parents have recommended it. Great for helping us get to our child's heart and not just turn out obedient children. **The Quiver** by Doug & Vickie Jacoby – A great book on raising children, especially if you are of a non-American culture. **Parenting Your Adult Children** by Ross Campbell and Gary Chapman – The best book I've seen dealing with all situations with our children who have grown up and left (or not) our home. Especially good to help you through those really tough times when your kids leave God or fail to launch.

I hope these recommendations help, and we invite you to go to the North River Church of Christ's website to look at the parenting seminar that was taped. You can go through our church website: www.atlantachurchofchrist-gwinnett.org, click on related links, ACOC, ministries, North River site.

Bible Trivia

(Do it with your kids)

1. How old was Jesus when he started his ministry?
2. Name the 3 people in the Bible who fasted for 40 days?

Deacon's Directory

Karl Lynn	New Members	770-979-4292
Peter Berry	Benevolence	678-376-1878
Danny Doble	Spanish Translation	770-931-0601
Audie Flowers	Visitation	770-277-5749
Patrick Freeman	Kingdom Kids	770-921-1811
Glenn Hayes	Kingdom Kids	770-985-6921
Dan Stehr	Visitation	770-925-2943
Bill Francis	Visitation	770-806-8645
Todd Reynolds	High School	770-682-0027
Russ McGarr	Middle School	770-381-5045
Alvin Modest	Worship	678-344-0061
Steve Collier	Teens-Parents	770-717-5784
Danny Emmett	Hope, Events	770-985-4542
Jeff Mueller	Benevolence	770-492-0544
Kendall Knight	Music Service	770-972-6887

Contribution

3/07 - \$10,590.45

3/14 - \$9,459.75

3/21 - \$8,356.75

3/28 - \$7,838.75

Answers to Bible Trivia
1. About 30
2. Moses, Elijah and Jesus

Family Group Leaders

Young Marrieds

Kyle & Sharon Ross L'ville 770-513-6224
John and Meemua Yang Lilburn 770-380-1865

Middle School Parents

Joseph & Lisa Washington L'ville 678-407-0306

Teen Parents

Derrick & Michelle Brewer L'ville 770-962-8070
Leslie & Danie Cadet Dacula 678-651-0912

Singles

Jim & Chandra Dew L'ville 770-330-3479

Spanish Ministry

Danny & Cynthia Doble Lilburn 770-931-0601

Prime Time

Glenn & Sheila Hayes Loganville 770-985-6921